

MASONRY IN MANITOBA

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THE PAPAL BULLS AGAINST FREEMASONRY

Although the Roman Catholic opposition to freemasonry is common knowledge, it should be known also that there were originally a great many Roman Catholic freemasons in all the countries where freemasonry flourished, among them being priests and high dignitaries of the Church, a condition which held good for many years (indeed, all through the eighteenth century in some countries), even after Pope Clement XII in 1738 and Benedict XIV in 1751 had issued their Bulls denouncing freemasonry. In Liege, Belgium (to cite an instance given by Count Goblet D'Alviella), the Roman Catholic Bishop Velbruck, who ruled his ecclesiastical Principality from 1772 to 1784, was a devoted freemason, as were many of his canons and officials. One of these, the Rev. Canon de Geloës, was founder and first Master of La Parfaite Intelligence, at Liege, which was first a French and later a Belgian lodge, while another, Rev. Canon Nicolas Devaux, was Master of another Liege lodge, La Parfait Egalite; other instances could be given. It is to be assumed that it was the comparative inattention paid to the Bulls in some quarters that led to a whole series of Papal edicts, beginning in 1821, confirming and renewing them.

The Roman Catholic objections to freemasonry are not difficult to understand, even though we, as freemasons, do not acknowledge their soundness. A pamphlet, *Freemasonry* (revised edition, 1935), published by the Catholic Truth Society, after describing Anglo-Saxon freemasons as "Inoffensive and well-meaning people" and admitting that freemasonry is "beneficial to the country, or at any rate quite harmless," then makes quite clear that the solemn oath of secrecy is one of the "two main grounds of objection," the other and apparently more serious one being that freemasonry "tends to undermine belief in Catholic Christianity by substituting for it what is practically a rival religion based on deistic or naturalistic principles." In reply it should be said that freemasonry is not claimed to be a religion. It is a system of morality, of philosophy. A candidate for its privileges is entitled to hold what religious principles and beliefs he pleases; the Craft will not belittle them and will respect their holder as long as he brings into freemasonry just one all-essential part of his code—a belief in the "Glorious Architect of heaven and earth."

Freemasonry calls upon its members to practise the sacred duties of morality, and offers itself, as the Ancient Charges tell us, as "the centre of union between good men and true, and the happy means of conciliating friendship amongst those who must otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance."

—From *Freemasons' Guide and Compendium*

MASONIC BROTHERHOOD DISASTER FUND

Every brother of every Lodge in the jurisdiction will receive along with his regular notice for the month of February a brochure outlining the inauguration of a campaign to raise a Special Reserve Fund. The appeal has been inspired by our Grand Master and it carries the unanimous endorsement of the Board of General Purposes. The purpose of the Fund is explained in the booklet. Please read it carefully. The final success will depend upon you, upon me, and the other brethren who make up our total membership which approximates 15,000.

The objective set is a minimum of \$25,000.00. It might seem that such a goal will be reached without much difficulty, and looking at our membership total and offsetting this against the objective might suggest an average within easy reach. Now it is very easy to make use of simple arithmetic and thus arrive at a false conclusion. In projects of this nature the simple laws of arithmetic just don't apply. The reason is not far to seek, or find.

In an organization such as ours there are those upon whom the hand of adversity has fallen. These unfortunate brethren cannot and are not expected to suffer further hardship by denying themselves in order to make up an arbitrary average contribution.

Then we know of others, who, by reason of compulsory retirement from work, eke out a living under adverse circumstances. True, they manage to maintain their memberships—more power to their love and loyalty—but here again, the law of averages cannot be applied.

This brings us to those of our number who are in regular employment; some occupying prominent positions in the professional and business life of the province. To them comes the added responsibility of bearing a share of the less fortunate, the sick, the unemployed and the retired members of the Craft. So don't let us fool ourselves by setting up an arbitrary average as the extent of our own Masonic gift.

Freemasonry is what it is because across the years the brethren of the Mystic Tie have heeded the lesson of the North-East Corner. When the call went forth help was made available for the oppressed, the unfortunate and those who required our aid.

The call now before the membership is for the purpose of establishing a central fund from which your Grand Lodge may be in a position to do on behalf of you and the other 15,000 members of our Manitoba Lodges what other Grand Lodges did for the sufferers in this jurisdiction through the dark days of 1950.

By setting our sights with true Masonic precision we will, by the help of the G.A. of the U., in full measure, accomplish the objective set before us.

WHEN I RAISE MY SON

Soon I am to raise my son to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. I have gone over and over the ritual. It must be well-learned, second-nature. Instructing him in the work of the first two degrees, I have tried to impress on him that ritual is important, its truths far more so than its words. Yet even if the spirit giveth life, still there must be a body—and the body of good ritual I want him to regard highly. So I must not fail him.

I have prepared him, insofar as is right, for what he will experience tonight. I have tried to make him see that this is a solemn and a beautiful thing he does; that it is a great responsibility we take.

In imagination I see him, kneeling as we all have knelt, saying the dear old words we have all said, taking upon his heart and conscience the obligations of brotherhood we have all assumed. But the picture blurs; is it my grown son who thus travels the way of initiation? If so, whose is that curly head that marches beside him? What are golden ringlets doing in a Masonic lodge?

The first time he ever met me at the garden gate; long, long journey for little feet just learning to walk. How proud he was that he had toddled all of twenty feet without falling! Many times since he has met me; now with a wooly lamb, then with a tin fire engine, later with a resigned kitten clutched tightly to small breast. When real knickers replaced the rompers of baby days he came running with a dog barking at his heels—and always with the joyous shout of "Daddy, my Daddy!"

Tonight he learns to approach the East as a Master Mason—will that cry still be on his lips? My little lad is all grown up. . . .

I think again of the ritual and the Five Points of Fellowship.

All his life a father goes on foot to serve his son's small whims as his essential needs. Tonight I am to go with him on foot once more, to guide and show the way. But he is a man, now, to find his own road.

Many times upon my knees I have petitioned the Great Architect for him; selfless prayers for his welfare, and for my own guidance that his groping feet might find the way. Tonight he must pray for himself.

I have kept his secrets; aye, from the day he confessed to the stolen jam, unknowing that it was spread large across his lips, through the years when pranks less innocent brought boyish trouble, to that hour when he introduced me to his girl. Soon it will be others who must keep his secrets.

To support one's children is the duty of all parents; let me make no claim for credit there. Yet the symbolism of the Five Points is so carried out. Do all fathers, I wonder, feel a sense of loss when they need no longer stretch forth a hand to support a child?

How often have I given him good counsel! Too often, perhaps—one makes no headway lecturing. They must all learn

for themselves, these young men. Tonight I will tell him what it means, Masonically, to counsel and to warn of impending danger. But will it mean much to him who has had always counsel and warning from me?

I will raise him from a dead level to a living perpendicular. As I picture the brethren standing, the room still, that none miss a word of the dramatic moment, I see another raising. That room is hushed, too, as will be the lodge room. He lies at length, his eyes closed, and pale, as he may be tonight. There is a crowd present, too, an unseen gathering with rustling wings. We do not know, his mother, the nurse, the doctor and I, whether he will go with them or not.

Oh, terrible hour! Hour which almost every parent has known, dread minutes which teach him the relative value of his own life and that of his boy—moment when a father's soul is sicker than the wasted body which lies before him.

The doctor raised him, literally, from death to life. The dreaded membranes were cut—the breath whistled in his lungs again, and the ultimate Gethsemane of fatherhood receded.

I will not think of that tonight. I would raise my son as impersonally as the Worshipful Master will raise another candidate.

They will tell my boy many things tonight; he will learn of the Three Steps, of the All Seeing Eye; the meaning of the Hour Glass and the Scythe. I must keep my mind on what I am to do and to say, not upon what I will think.

The brethren who will crowd the room will not wholly understand. To them it is but another good young man becoming a member of the Ancient Craft. To me it is my son becoming my brother—Oh, strange relationship!

And yet, how dear to the heart, this sonship of a brother, how queer, this brotherhood of a son. As if positions were reversed and I the son and he the father! As I say over and over the words so familiar they have lost their meaning and become but sounds which do not interfere with thoughts, I know that he has taught me more than I have taught him.

We learn only by experience, not by precept. I have been only precept to him—he has been a long and lovely experience to me. From my son I learned the meaning of life, the reason for existence; in the slang of the day, he has taught me “what it is all about.”

What have I taught him?

I do not know. I know what he is, but doubtless he would have become that without me. But I could not have become myself without him. He has taught me self-control, the joy of unselfish effort, the meaning of hope and fear. Through him I have learned a new conception of religion, a higher idea of brotherhood, a greater knowledge of Freemasonry.

“My brother, I am happy to meet you. . . .” How strange it will be to greet him thus, as if we were strangers. Masonically

we are; he is yet but a Fellowcraft who tonight must travel the road over which we all have gone. My heart will beat faster but I shall not let my voice tremble.

Tonight my son graduates from boyhood into manhood, from a Fellowcraft into a Master Mason. I see him as he graduated before; first, from his grade school to High School. President of his little class, he was; so serious, so important, so impressed with the solemnity of the occasion! His diploma hangs on the wall of his room, its ribbons a little faded, its ink a little pale with the years. Next to it, is that newer, fresher diploma, certifying that he has completed four years in High School. He was not president of that class, just one of the large group. But the applause when he passed across the platform was loud and long. I could hear it, though I could not see. . . .

Tonight he joins another class; he was twenty-one last year. I smile at the memory of that birthday party; the brave little knot of young fellows who gathered around him and took me in with them, bless their hearts. Together we made merry until the small hours. Tonight it is we who are older who must take him in with us, celebrate his Masonic birthday, not just tonight but all his life and ours—celebrate with the quiet satisfaction of fraternity, the peace of friendship, the benediction of brotherly love.

A small and golden procession passes before me; my little boy with yellow curls, in rompers; a larger lad, but still a wee one, in new "real" trousers, going alone the first time to school, so independent; a boy whose eyes shone like stars when he found his first bicycle under a Christmas tree; a proud but bashful boy with his first athletic prize; a lad grown broad of shoulder and stout of limb, staggering up the beach with the baby he had pulled from water too deep for her; the first long trousers and the sly blush when he first spoke of *her*. . . .

At the head of the procession strides the man I will tonight raise a Mason. All that the dear old Fraternity has meant to me, may it mean to him. May he, too, find in its secluded halls the friends of his heart. May he, also, draw from its teachings and learn from its truths those principles which make life better worth living. If he can give to it, he will get from it, but only if he loves it will he want to give to it. Therefore does it behoove me to make this ceremony as dignified and as impressive as I may, that his first impressions of the Light may be beautiful and not too blinding.

In the old lodge lies friendship, waiting—many will accept him for my sake at first, who later, I hope and pray, will cleave to him for his own. In the old lodge is sanctuary from care and worry, the brotherly hand in time of need, the comfort of sympathy and affection—he has but to stretch forth his hand to take.

But he must stretch forth that hand.

Thus, a great responsibility is mine, that he be taught aright to love our Institution.

—Carl H. Claudy.

OUR MASONIC TEMPLE

During the past few years we have noticed with particular delight the ever-increasing desire of the brethren to construct and own their own particular place in which the work of Freemasonry may be carried on. In this connection it is of particular interest to repeat words written by Dr. Joseph Fort Newton at the time the corner stone of the great Masonic Temple of Detroit, Michigan, was laid.

"What mean ye by these stones?" By them we humbly affirm our faith in God as the Corner Stone and Master Builder of the Universe, knowing that they build in vain who build not on His foundations. Nothing can endure unless it is wrought in righteousness and good-will, in obedience to the Moral Law, in harmony with the creative and cohesive spirit of Love. Thus we seek to imitate on earth the wisdom and beauty of the Eternal Architect, His laws our rules, His rhythm our ritual.

"What mean ye by these stones?" By them we plight our faith in the Divinity of Man, his capacity for spiritual being, and the immutable necessity of fraternal righteousness as the cement of all society, more especially our own. We hold that to build a Beloved Community in freedom, friendship and moral worth is the purpose of the life of man which, by the worship of God and the service of humanity, we reverently seek to fulfil in the midst of the years.

"What mean ye by these stones?" By them we renew our allegiance to Home and Country and the House of God, pledging Freemasonry to the defense of Liberty, the practice of Justice, and the spread of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, making the gains of industry upright, the use of power considerate, and the culture of good-will habitual; that Goodness may grow and be glorified and pity and joy walk the common ways of life.

"What mean ye by these stones?" By them we prophesy a time, or soon or late, when Love shall everywhere prevail, to the defeat of all unkindness and all uncleanness; when men of all creeds shall know that they love and seek one God, the Father of all; and folk of all races shall dwell together in mutual respect and good-will, in an unfortified world ruled by moral wisdom, spiritual intelligence, and practical fraternity. So mote it be.

AMONG THE LODGES

The brethren of Lisgar Lodge No. 2, meeting at Selkirk, Man., unveiled a Memorial Window in Selkirk Masonic Temple on Sunday, November 29th. This tribute was in memory of W.R. Brother Robert M. Muckle, who contributed much to the work of his Mother Lodge. The address was delivered by M.W. Brother Harry B. Donnelly.